

THE GIVVER

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(Drawn by C. J. STANILAND.)

"She shall be as one of our own children, John."—p. 13.

UNDER THE ELMS.—II.

MANY weeks elapsed before John Milward again appeared in Ockley, and when the neighbours saw him once more, they knew that they saw an altered man. He was every day and all day in the office now, at hard, unflinching work, thriftily seeing to his business, and managing his affairs. Every one had sympathy and pity for him. The rector's wife took the poor little

stranger, whose arrival had been so unwelcome, and into such a scene of misery, and promised to be to her that mother whom she had lost.

"She shall be as one of our own children, John," she had said to him, and he had let her take the little thing away without a word; not that he was ungrateful, or failed to realise the kindness, but he could not speak of these things now.

Who that had seen him as he stood in the little churchyard, watching the rude dust and ashes flung upon that dust that was dear to him as his own life—who could have thought that there were greater miseries still in store, and that darker days—much darker days—were to come upon him yet? For had he not now the sympathy of all? Did not every one of those who thronged round the grave show, as plainly as sad faces, and the assurance of a look can show, that they had pity for him in this his great sorrow?

As if as a respite from the cares that were upon him, he now gave himself up utterly to his business. The routine work of the past year, with its day of toil succeeded by the rest and pleasure of the evening, was as a thing of the past—a dream that had vanished. The old, hard, unflinching work was his lot now.

Mr. Bellamy had an assistant now, and the two clerks could scarce get through the business which John's resolute industry attracted to him. Those Saturday nights at the parsonage became fewer and fewer, and at last almost ceased. In their stead came the struggle after increased connections and agencies, whose importance would have before kept him aloof. He worked hard, and would give to those who worked with him no opportunities of idleness, or even of rest, which he denied to himself. Every one was talking now (for in Ockley the folk were always in a sort of conversational turmoil) about the heavy business he was doing, engrossing it from all quarters to himself, and the amount of money which he must have been making was fixed at a sum fabulous indeed for a little country town. Unfortunately, talk did not end here, and those gossips at Ockley had something more to tell of besides mere industry and its rewards. Sad news this was to all his friends, and even those who most fed upon scandal would have wished this tale could have been told of any other.

"But do you think he can be guilty?" said poor Mrs. Seymour, who had been out in the village, and heard it all for the first time. "Tom, surely he cannot be guilty." She could not join in the town-talk, and had at once, then and there, scouted the whole thing as untrue, and not to be entertained for a moment; but when she came home, and thought how he had absented himself from them, her heart misgave her.

"Tom," she said, "surely he cannot be guilty."

"We have no right to assume that he is, my dear," said her husband; "we mustn't assume that he is."

"But, Tom, every one condemns him, even Mrs. Sutcliffe is down upon him; I met her to-day at the Morley's, and she says that it must all come out soon; that Mr. Rivers insists that he never signed the bill at all, and that it's a forgery."

"Yes, my dear, the whole truth will be known soon."

She knew, from the way he said it, what he thought was the truth, and this grieved her more.

"Tom," she said at last, "if John has quarrelled with us, even though it is his own fault, we ought to forget it now. We are his oldest friends here, and when he's in trouble we should not pass him by. The whole truth will be known soon, you say, and then he will not want our help, or, or—we may not be able to give it to him." And then she reminded him how kind John had been to her when she came, a stranger, into the place; and she spoke of poor Mary, too, and brought in from the next room her little child, which they had adopted, and she and the little unconscious infant pleaded with him there, each in her several way, till he could resist no longer, but yielded, and was won over. Then she walked with him down the lawn to the gate, warning him all the way to speak gently and kindly to his old friend. She needed not have done it, for what she had said already had awakened all the old feelings of friendship.

Now, while all this scene was going on, John sat in the little arbour, looking down the two tree-avenues at the church and the parsonage. It was not his wont to come here, or to come anywhere, at this hour; but he had left his house this evening, and closed the door behind him for the last time, and he was flying from the place which had witnessed all his pleasures and happiness, before judgment and condemnation should come upon him. Passing up the walk for the last time, hurriedly, and with his face askance from the passers-by, he stopped at the little path into the arbour, and a better impulse tempted him to visit it too. From it he could see the grounds of the parsonage and the avenue leading to the gate; and, as he watched, the door of the house opened, and Tom Seymour walked down the lawn, his wife talking to him the whole time, and stopping him with some last words, even at the gate. He saw his old friend coming towards him under the trees, and he left the arbour and wandered into the wood, dreading such a meeting. But when the clergyman had passed he returned to his seat, and once more his eyes rested sadly upon the parsonage, containing all which remained to him of that dream of his past life. He looked at it

long and thoughtfully, and then left the arbour, and skirted along the trees till he reached the garden gate; he passed up the avenue and through the open door into the hall. He hesitated to turn the handle of the dining-room door, and walk in. Many months had passed since last he was in that house, where once he was a daily visitor. He had wronged the owner of it; he had wronged him and quarrelled with him, and yet, day after day, he was taking the greatest of all kindnesses at his hands. He dared not to face him. But then he thought of Grace; how soft and kind she had been to him in his sorrow and bereavement! and, thinking of all this, he turned the handle, and walked in. He found the room empty—no one in it; but he could hear voices from the next room, for the nursery door was half open, and he sat down and listened.

How well he knew her soft and gentle voice! and, hearing it, and the words she spoke, what a picture came before his mind!—a picture so vivid and so touching, that he rose from his chair, and pushing open the door, peeped in. She was bending over the cot in which the child lay—bending very low, so as almost to touch it, and the little thing put out its hand and caught at her hair, and dragged it in its little fingers, till her long black tresses fell over its face. Then she caught up the little child and hugged it closely to her, and danced it up into the air till it screamed with shrill delight; while her own face lit up and shone out through the long hair that was tossed and scattered over it. "For she's my own little daughter—my own little daughter, and papa's coming to see her to-night. Father's been a very naughty father, and has not come to her for a long time—oh, for such a long time! But he'll come to-night—father'll come and see her to-night."

This was the sight he saw—these were the words he heard; and, with these words ringing in his ears, he slunk out of the house and fled from the place, a guilty and miserable man.

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So much of my tale I have put together baldly, hinting at what has taken place, rather than telling it, because all that you have heard happened a long time ago—full nineteen years ago.

Nineteen years, then, have passed over our heads, and here we are back at Ockley. How changed the place is! it's twice as big and three times as busy. This is the railway station, the branch line through Ockley Vale has been opened these two years, and half a dozen trains go and come from London daily.

"What's the bell for, porter?"

"Seven-five up train due, sir." And here, in fact, it comes! looming along through the tunnel.

The passengers for Ockley-on-the-Hill jump out and claim their luggage. They are not very many in number, and we have no difficulty in singling

out the one who has interest for us. Time, that is at its silent work with all, has dealt gently with him;—only the grey hairs have become white, and the lines are deeper in the face, and the steady, determined mien and walk are gone. He has come back a sadder man and a better. He looks with a kind of wonder on the porter who piles his luggage on the cab; and when the man asks the direction, he hesitates a little.

"Jordan and Ivatt's Hotel," he says, at last; "drive to Jordan and Ivatt's Hotel."

The man looks confused; but the porter shouts out, "The Old Bath Hotel," and tells the traveller that Jordan and Ivatt have retired these ten years, and the hotel is now managed by Mr. Edward Carpenter. With these words the cab drives off.

So Jordan and Ivatt have retired, and the old house is now administered by Mr. Edward Carpenter. Our traveller wonders can this be the waiter he recollects there as Ned. What other changes will he see in the place? He looks eagerly from the window, but sees familiar points only from time to time. Almost everything has a strange face for him; not now, though, for he's in his own street, and, in fact, here's the hotel—just the same place as ever.

The best of plain dinners is served to him in that private room; and after it, he sends for his host, Mr. Edward Carpenter, that he may have a little talk with him. The quondam Ned is delighted to come, and freely pours forth to the stranger all the gossip of the town.

"And indeed, sir, you seem to know the place very well;" but the traveller explains to him that he had a friend who belonged to the town a long time ago—twenty years or more—and who was always talking of it to him; after this he goes on with his questions.

Ned has a great deal to tell him. The old Earl of Doublegloster is dead, died unmarried; and there was a sale up at Cheddar Castle last week. Dr. Brougham bought most of the pictures. The old doctor's alive still, and doing a great practice: he tires a pair of horses every day.

"And the rector?" the stranger asks, timidly.

"Right well, sir, right well. He was put out a bit at first about Mr. Henry's marriage; but it's all settled now, and that's Mrs. Seymour's doing: she managed it."

"And whom is he going to be married to?"

"That's where it is, sir. Mr. Henry, he's a most fit to marry any one, showering his money about everywhere, as if he had lots of it. And Miss Mary's nice too—nice and nice looking; but they can't live on their looks, you know."

"But who's Mr. Henry in love with?"

"There you have me again, sir, for not one of us knows very well who she is. Some says she's a cousin of Mrs. Seymour's; and then there's others

say she's a daughter of old Milward, the attorney, who ran away from this twenty years ago; and more's the pity there should be anything against her, for she's as good as gold. At first there was terrible work to break it off; but it's all settled now, and they're to be married in the morning."

Much more did the landlord of the "Old Bath Hotel," say,—many things about many persons; but he had lost his listener. John sat silent and let him go on, till he stopped himself; and then let him go away. And when at length the room was cleared, and the door locked to keep off all intrusion, he paced up and down, turning over in his own mind the bitterest of all thoughts. This, then, was the promised end; this was the day to which he had been looking forward for so many years. In that far-away country, where he had lived an honourable life, cancelling, as he believed, by acts of charity and hours of repentance the bitter past, restoring fourfold aught he had taken from any man by false accusation—in that distant country he had thought that all the happiness of his life might be collected into the single day when he would return to his own town and his own family: and now the day had come, and the first stranger he met had to tell him of "old Milward, the attorney, who ran away twenty years ago."

So, full of all these thoughts, hard and stern as they were, he left the hotel, and wandered about through the streets. Every house that he passed was familiar with those years that he had never forgotten, and woke up for him some fresh association; and then he looked curiously at the new quarter of the town—parts that had been planned and built while he was away, till at last, and quite unexpectedly, he came upon the old church. It seemed to him more insignificant than he ever thought it before, and quite depressed by the weight of ivy that clung to it and hung from every part of it; but there was the fine avenue of trees as grand as ever.

How many strange remembrances came crowding in upon him, as once again he walked under their shade; how many trifling incidents that could scarcely have found a halting-place in his memory were fresh now as when they first happened! So that it was more instinct than intention that made him turn off from the main road and find his way into the arbour. He looked down the side avenue, and saw the old parsonage, with its gardens and grounds just as he had left them. Soon the half-closed door was thrown wide open, and he strained his eyes, watching the crowd of people that came out from the drawing-room and wandered over the garden. He tried to single out from them the two or three whom he would have gladly seen; but the distance was great, and his sight was not as keen now as it had been twenty years ago, the last time

he had looked from the same place. As he sat there, with this view before him, he tried to collect his thoughts and think over his plans for the future. He had come out full of wrath and bitterness, but, somehow, the old things that surrounded him softened and abated all his anger. He would not remain longer in the place; he would not, by his presence, throw any shade over his daughter's happiness, nor disturb the peace of the rector by coming forward and asserting his forgotten relationship. The selfish happiness, which he had looked forward to as a dream, must pass as a dream from him. He would leave the place to-night—no, not to-night; he *must* see her somehow, and the husband who was to be hers till death should part them; after that, he would go away—anywhere, it mattered not where; but she must nevertheless be the richest heiress round Ockley; in *that*, at least, he must not be disappointed. This all settled, he returned to the hotel.

Next day came with great importance for the village. Every wedding was a festival day at Ockley; but there had been so much wondering at and talking over, and assertion, and repetition, and contradiction about this wedding, that when the day actually came, it was quite a red-letter day. Never had the church looked so small, or so insufficient to the crowd that thronged about, and never was a crowd so friendly—for, indeed, they were all friends, and had come upon a friendly mission.

The rector was there, of course, standing within the rails and reading out the service; he has aged greatly since we saw him last, and the years have left their marks, deepening the lines in his face; but Mrs. Seymour is very little altered—only the grey hairs have given way to the white ones; her glance is still as warm and assuring as ever. And not only the rector and his wife, but all our old friends have assembled for this occasion; the doctor's brougham is waiting outside for him at the church door, and his coachman has got a little boy to hold the horse, and is himself watching the ceremony, safe from being seen, up in the organ-loft; and there, I declare to you, in one of the state pews, is our old—our very old friend, Miss Griffiths, who has not missed a wedding at Ockley these many years.

But all this time the wedding has been going on, and the bride and bridegroom, kneeling side by side, have answered or repeated the solemn words of the minister, and now they all rise to pass into the vestry-room, where their names will appear different for the last time. The people swayed and thronged up the aisle to get a view of the procession as it passed; they were a good-humoured crowd, and bore the crushing, and even made room for an old man who was amongst them, and seemed more eager than any of them. Ho

forced his way to the very front row, and stood there for a moment looking at the group; then, stick in hand, he crossed the little chancel of the church, and passed through the knot of bridesmaids and wedding guests till he came to the bride and bridegroom, and spoke to them.

"I am an old man," he said, "and a stranger to these parts, and I am here to give you both my blessing;" and he took the bridegroom, who seemed a little embarrassed, by the hand. "Don't mind my being a stranger," he said to him: "the blessing of an old man never did the young any harm;" and then he put out his hand to the bride, but it trembled when she took it in hers, and his voice faltered and would not give out his words, and holding her hand still in his, he looked down upon the ground, as if his purpose were all gone; then, in a few soft words, she thanked him, but he, when he heard the voice, started and looked up, and saw her face now for the first time, and the words came to him quickly enough, for he saw her blue eyes wistfully looking up to him through

the bridal veil, and for a moment she seemed to him as his own wife, whom he had led from this very altar, full of hope and youth, twenty long years ago. The words came to him very quick now, so that he dreaded to speak them out, and the tears gathered fast, but he caught her in his arms and kissed her, lest he should spoil her happiness with the one word "daughter!" then he returned into the crowd, and, wondering, it made way for him, and so he passed out of the church.

They would have forgiven him, would frankly have forgiven him all; they would have welcomed him back to Ockley, and have made the day of his return a holiday through the whole town—but this was not to be. He had to learn the bitter truth, that neither man's repentance nor man's forgiveness can cancel a past act; they might pardon and he might grieve, but justice and judgment belong not to man but unto thee, O Lord, to whom also belongeth mercy.

W. L. W.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

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"Go, and do thou likewise,"—Luke x. 37.



HE parable of the Good Samaritan arose out of a question put to our Lord by one who was professionally engaged in the study and interpretation of the law of Moses. "A certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him." It seems that he had some insidious design in making this inquiry. We know that the Lord was frequently beset by captious cavillers, eager to make out some charge against him: thus the Sadducees made their strange inquiry about domestic relationships in the world to come; and the Herodians put a question about paying the tribute money. Still, there was nothing to awaken offensive suspicion in this man's question. He may only have desired to bring forward a most important subject, to see how the Lord would deal with it.

Be the motive what it may, it is a question of life and death, demanding the most solemn consideration of every man, woman, and child. "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" With what weight of meaning every word falls upon the ear! Yet, momentous as it is, how very few ever put the question in serious earnestness to themselves. Ten thousand other questions, public and private, agitate and absorb men's minds—questions of successful labour, realising wealth, or frand, or sloth, or dullness, ending in poverty and shame, questions of all kinds are

suggested by pride or pleasure, by envy or ambition—these things are discussed every day with persevering avidity; but this question which relates to the soul, and its interest in the world to come—how sins are to be pardoned—how the sinner can stand in conscious safety before God in the last great day—by what means he can secure a good hope when life's vain dream shall end—to this great question, how few give any serious consideration! It is laid aside as a gloomy and unwelcome intrusion disturbing more congenial thoughts. "If we must think of it," say they, "at least, let us put it off till the time when sickness, and graves, and funerals, and such like repulsive things, can be no longer forgotten." But do not you, reader, incur the peril of such neglect. If life, slowly but surely, is leading us to death,—if the busy stream of this world will soon be merged into the vortex of the next,—if the broad road is thronged with the unforgiven and the careless, and if men that live without Christ must die without hope—then, as you value the soul, as you desire peace with God when you die, and bright hopes when death is over, let nothing hinder you from putting the lawyer's question to your own heart, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Mark the Lord's answer. Had the man been awakened to know his own condition of guilt before God, the Lord would, at once, have revealed him-

self as the way of life and peace. But this lawyer, like the young ruler in another chapter, had no such conviction of sin. The Lord directed both of them therefore to the law, that by the law they might gain the knowledge of sin. "The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." "Jesus saith unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?"—Thou knowest the law, ceremonial and political, which Moses gave to Israel, for thy business is to teach it; thou knowest all the six hundred and thirteen different commandments the law contains; thou knowest the ten great precepts of the moral law—but, give me its spirit and meaning: say, what is the sum and substance of the whole? What are the commandments, which if a man will obey he shall obtain eternal life? "What is written in the law? how readest thou?"

Many of my readers are habitually studying the Bible. Question yourselves about its spirit and meaning: *what* is written, and *how* you are reading? Ask yourself to give an account of some portion you have just read—give the substance—repeat distinctly the leading points of instruction which the chapter contains. What—*what* is written in the law? And ask, too, the Lord's question: *How* readest thou? Some people read the Scriptures ignorantly; some read them negligently; some read them sceptically; and some read them, like the Ethiopian treasurer, that they may there find the way of salvation; but, *how* readest thou?

This man had evidently read the moral law with an intelligent insight into its meaning. He could lay his finger distinctly upon its great aims and obligations. He saw clearly that love is the fulfilling of the law; that a man's supreme love to God is the sum of the first table, and love to his fellow-man is the sum of the second. "And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." He learned this summary of duty out of the moral law. He knew more about his duty to God and man than all the wise philosophers of Athens, or Alexandria, or Rome. Our Lord commended his knowledge and discernment of truth: "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." Go, and put thy knowledge into practice; love the Lord thy God supremely as thou hast said; love thy neighbour as thyself; and thou shalt inherit the kingdom of heaven.

Perhaps he perceived already the drift of the Lord's inquiry, and was willing to clear himself. He felt anxious to put himself right with the Lord in this matter. He repelled any suspicion that he had not kept the law—"As to the first table, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,' of course I love

him; and as to loving my neighbour as myself, I love those whom I ought to love. No man thinks he is to love every one. There must be some limitation. There are persons whom I ought to love as I love myself: tell me who they are, and my love to them shall not be wanting. I acknowledge that I am bound to love my neighbour; but the question I want to know is this, 'Who is my neighbour?'"

Now here we see that in his answer the Lord rather met the scribe's thoughts than the words of his question. The Lord did not immediately tell him who his neighbour was; he does not point out the particular man whom he ought to love, but he turns his thoughts to the love which he is bound to cherish. He leaves out the specific instance, and speaks about the principle within. The true love of your neighbour is not an act towards certain individuals, or a thing of outside circumstances; but it is a principle of benevolence ever reigning in the heart. I do not say that this man or that is your neighbour, but I bid you see that you have the love, and compassion, and readiness to do good actively ruling in the breast, and you will soon find who the neighbour is on whom you may expend your love. "You ask who is your neighbour. I will show you a man, that loved his fellow-creatures as he ought to love. Give me attention, and I will describe his character. In the emergencies of life set this man's example before you; consider him well; receive the instruction he is meant to give, then go, and do likewise."

These are the circumstances: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves." We know nothing of his rank or nation, or character. That was purposely left out. He was a man, and as such, had a claim upon the sympathy and aid of his brother man. The road along which he was journeying was as celebrated for its insecurity to travellers, as for the beauty of its scenery. It was infested by highwaymen. A gang of these brigands fell upon the solitary man. Not content with plundering him of all his property, and even stripping off his clothing, they treat him with such merciless barbarity that he is almost killed. Lying on the roadside already half dead, they leave him to his fate, and make off with the booty. As the traveller lay there faint and bleeding, "by chance there came down a certain priest that way." The translation, "chance," is incorrect and objectionable. Nothing occurs by chance. It was not chance, but the coincidence of providential events, that led "a certain priest to go down that way," just as the wounded wayfarer lay expiring by the roadside. It was his golden opportunity for doing good. Providence laid before him that special conjunction of circumstances, whereby he might show that he loved his neighbour as himself. But he lost his opportunity.

He was returning from Jerusalem. Clad in priestly vestments, he had been engaged in the sacred offices of the Temple, offering the sacrifice, diffusing fragrant incense, conducting the worship of the people: and now, his sacerdotal offices discharged, he is returning homeward to Jericho. He was exactly rubrical in the performance of official duties; but, of justice, mercy, and faith—the weightier matters of the law—he took no cognisance. To lessen human misery formed, in his estimation, no part of his sacred calling. God will have mercy, and not sacrifice; this priest will have sacrifice, but not mercy. Of all the varied forms that hypocrisy loves to assume, that is the most flagrant and repulsive which conceals a cold, unimpathising heart under the garb and sacredness of religion. It is hateful even to man, but infinitely more offensive to the Most High. “To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and the Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. These things I delight in, saith the Lord God.”

“And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.” Attracted, as it seems, by some groans of distress, the Levite crossed half over the road, saw some one lying there who had been plundered, and ill-treated, then turned away, “and passed by on the other side.” Perhaps the Levite had observed that the priest went straight on, without even stopping to notice the dying man; and the thought occurred to him, “If my superior passes on, why should I delay and concern myself about a dying man?” Men seldom want a precedent to sanction their ungenerous neglects. Selfishness easily creates converts. The example of another’s indifference soon quenches the glow of sympathy. The Levite, prompted by generous impulse, crossed half-way over, and just looked on. But his heart rebuked his eyes. On second thought, he crossed back again, and passed by on the other side. If there had been an ox or an ass helplessly prostrate under its burden, he would have rendered immediate help; but here lies a man—a neighbour, a brother man, of like sympathies with themselves, and yet these two ecclesiastics, just

returning from their sacred offices, can hear the expiring groans, can see him gasping for his last breath, and not move a finger to abate his suffering or save his life.

Do you ask, “And who is my neighbour?” Look there! See that man dying of wounds, and fever, and neglect. Does your creed recognise the duty of caring for your brother man? Then show it; here is your opportunity. If your bosom glows with any generous feeling, ask not who is your neighbour; the stern events of life will teach you who your neighbour is, and where he lies. See him there, on that highway, helpless and sinking. Go up to him, feel for him, as every man ought to feel for his brother man. Do him the kindness he needs—act the part of a loving neighbour to that suffering man. Do not, like the priest, just glance and then pass by; do not, like the Levite, glance and approach two steps nearer, and still pass by. Here, in this world, you *may* pass him by; but know this—he will lie right across your path, and bear his testimony against you, in the world to come.

“But a certain Samaritan”—I can imagine the altered countenance of the scribe, as soon as our Lord uttered the hated name, Samaritan. Aliens in blood, aliens in language, aliens in religion, the Samaritan hated the Jew as much as the Jew hated the Samaritan. “But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was.” The priest hardly looked at the wounded traveller, the Levite looked and came partly towards him; but the Samaritan went right up to him—looked, examined, felt for him. Stranger as this traveller is, and alien, still, he is a man—has the wants and feelings of a man; his countenance is *wrong* with anguish; his looks implore pity; his upraised hand feebly beckons for help. Nor does he ask in vain. With good men, sympathy is ever stronger than prejudice. Samaritan though he was, “he had compassion.” His heart bore sway. Forgetting all antipathies, regardless of the business on which he was journeying, heedless of robbers who might attack him too, he came to the spot where the traveller lay, stooped down to examine, closed his gaping wounds, stopped the bleeding, soothed the pain, bandaged his wounded limbs, and, when sufficiently revived, raised up the fainting sufferer, placed him upon his own beast, and walked carefully by his side until he had brought him to an inn.

Nor did he leave him even then, but remained all night watchfully ministering to his wants; and “on the morrow,” when duty required him to pursue his journey, he still commended the sufferer to the special care of the inn-keeper, and with liberal hand engages to meet any further charges to be incurred during his absence.

Fixing his eye with indescribable meaning upon the scribe, the Lord appealed to his own judgment: "Which now of these three—the priest, Levite, and Samaritan—thinkest thou, acted the neighbour to him? . . . Which of them showed the love; which of them did to that suffering traveller what he would like another to do towards him?" Unwilling to let the name Samaritan pass through his lips, still the scribe's conscience dictated the right answer: "He that had mercy upon him." The priest and the Levite acted not the neighbour's part; they left the man to die. With breathless haste they hurried home, and told of their marvellous escape; how they had actually seen some poor traveller lying on the roadside, stripped and plundered, and apparently in the agonies of death; and how fortunately, fleeing with the utmost speed, they escaped the perils of those mountain passes. They were not his neighbours. But this stranger—Samaritan though he was—he that denied himself that he might do good to a brother in need; he that loved him with a generous heart, that soothed his sufferings, dressed his wounds, and saved his life—this is the one who was "neighbour to him that fell among thieves."

"Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise." Be this the spirit in which thou shalt spend thy life. Cherish in thy bosom love like his. Go where thou wilt, and thou shalt find "neighbours" everywhere, lying among the straits and perils of life, who need thy compassionate attention. Copy this Samaritan. Let thine heart tenderly sympathise with the distressed; thy will be fixed in resolute self-denial; be unwearied in thy acts of kindness; thy benevolence large-hearted; engage others to help, while thou sparest not thyself in trouble or expense; think of this Samaritan, what he felt, and did, and gave; and then, wherever suffering abounds, and help is needed—go, with a heart and hand like his—"Go, and do thou likewise."

Instructive as this parable is to teach the obligation of Christian benevolence towards the needy and distressed, yet we are admonished by almost all Scripture interpreters that this parable yields some grapes of still richer flavour, which it were well for us to stay one moment and taste. At any rate, the parallel is instructive.

For in the pitiable and perilous condition of this wounded traveller, we see a vivid portraiture of the whole human race after the Fall; and, as the man in the parable fell among thieves, who plundered and stripped him, and left him to die of his wounds, so here are we reminded of the robbery far more ruinous, wounds more grievous, and destitution more shameful, inflicted upon our fallen nature by him who was a "murderer from the beginning." In the treatment of that traveller we see the

wounds and despoilment of sin, for every sin is a deep gash, from which the life-blood of the soul is fast ebbing away. And, altogether, in the plight of that traveller—lying by the roadside, weltering in pools of blood, and heaving the convulsive sighs of death—I see an emblem of man, as sin and Satan left him, wounded, and without strength and ready to perish.

And the helplessness of the sinner is here depicted. Priest and Levite may pass by, but they bring no deliverance. Moses brought the law; but the law, like the prophet's staff upon the face of the lifeless child, left man lifeless still. Priests, and prophets, and sacrifices were all alike powerless to bring health to the wounded, life to the dying, or salvation to the lost. "And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor."

But what the law could not do, nor priest, nor Levite, nor prophet, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins," has accomplished for us. Christ came to seek and to save that which is lost. Let the world, in scorn and ignorance, say of him, if they will, "Thou art a Samaritan." If by a Samaritan, you mean One who *thought of us* in our low estate, when none else could or would; who left yonder heavens, came down here, and had compassion on us; who took on Him the form of a servant; came to bind up the broken-hearted, to give the oil of joy for mourning; who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor; then, I say, beneath the emblem of this good Samaritan, and his benevolence to the dying traveller, we see the Divine Saviour himself, bringing health to the wounded, peace to the guilty, and salvation to the lost. And just as the Samaritan carried the wounded traveller, walked by his side, and carefully provided for every want, so does the Lord gather his people into his arms—lead them day by day in all tenderness—supply all their need—and never cease to remember them, but in all the changes of life, their sorrows, and perils, and fears, evermore abides with them—a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother—unchanging and unchangeable, until he has brought them safely home, and presented them to the Father, in the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy.

But the parable bears directly upon the claims of Christian benevolence. It is not enough to cast a glance of admiring approbation upon the assiduous zeal in doing good which is here so graphically depicted, but each of us, in our walk of life, is commanded to go and do likewise. A case of great and urgent need came unexpectedly before this good Samaritan. He took much personal trouble to discover the facts; he felt tenderly for the distress, which he ascertained by diligent investigation on



(Drawn by J. D. WATSON.)

"Mother and little ones gather
Round thee in love-ving strife."—p. 26.

the spot; he yielded to the spontaneous impulse of his heart; spared no trouble or time or money; did his utmost to meet the case with effectual relief; he loved his neighbour as himself. This is walking in love. He feels that cases of such suffering have a claim on his benevolent regard. The man may not be my neighbour according to the world's reckoning. He may be a stranger—a foreigner—one of different religion, an alien in heart, and language, and interest; all mutual dealings may be interdicted by custom or prejudice or dislike; be it so; still, here is a man in distress—real, genuine, undissembled distress; he may not be my neighbour, but I will be neighbour to him. He is in need, I have it in my power to help, then help I will. I cannot do much—not all I wish—but I will do all I can. I will try to bring some help to that needy and neglected sufferer lying by the world's roadside. Whether it may be some ragged child—homeless, fatherless, friend-

less, or, worse still, the companion of false friends, training him to crime. It may be some little girl, left, deserted on the highway of life, exposed to villany, or tempted through want to sin. It may be some widowed mother, broken in health, and hope, and spirits, crushed with care, and wasting in secret neglect. I will seek them out; I will act the neighbour to the needy, and dry some weeper's tears; I will ease some weary burden, and kindle again the bright gleam of joy in the faded eye; I will tell the guilty that there is pardon, and the depraved how he may gain the conquest over his sinful self; I will forget to indulge myself, and taste the higher joy of helping others; and thus shall I have the blessing of him that was ready to perish, and cause the widow's heart to sing for joy; yea, I shall know the blessedness of him that considereth the poor and needy, and then I shall know for my great comfort that the Lord will deliver me in time of trouble.

AN IDYL OF LABOUR.

I.

A FLUSH of ether lightens all the west,
Where amber clouds bend down to meet the plain,

Upon whose hazy margent-line they rest—
A shimmering glory, far as eye can strain.

And in the distance rise the tapering shafts
Of giant workshops, high into the air,
Where Labour plies his myriad-handed crafts,
Mid pulsing steam, and beat, and roar, and whirl.

And, staining the fair beauty of the heaven,
The sooty vapour rolls its cloud on high;
And, vexing the sweet silence of the even,
The labouring engine booms unceasingly.

Hark! from the turret of the old town-hall
The bells peal out a-chiming in a psalm,
And on the ear the quaint sweet measures fall
Like tongues of angels speaking in the calm.

Of eventide, as in the days gone by
They spoke to holy men, when unawares
They entertained them. Oh! how soothingly
Those sweet bells bid men rest from toil and cares.

II.

Wipe off the sweat from thy brow, man,
Shake off the dust from thy clothes;
Thy day's work is over, and now, man,
Eve brings the hour of repose.

Out from the air close and steaming
With the breathing of toilers around;
Out, where the fresh breeze is teeming
With the odours of sweet pasture ground.

Where the green field, with cowslip and daisy,
Seems a carpet of silver and gold,
And the river winds, languid and lazy,
Through the meadows in many a fold.

There, bright looks are waiting to meet thee,
From faces of children, and wife;
There, glad voices ring out to greet thee—
The sunshine and music of life.

Up in thine arms with the baby,
As, crowing, he lifts his to thine;
Ah! but those tiny hands may be
Thy stay, when thy strength shall decline.

Mother and little ones gather
Round thee in love-ying strife;
Art thou not happy, O father?—
Husband, rejoice in thy wife.

The world may esteem thy lot lowly,
But manfully toil through thy time;
Labour's a mission most holy,
And duty can make life sublime.

Lift up thy head, and no fear, man,
When the lord in his chariot moves on;
The peasant, as much as the peer, man,
Is the strength of the nation and throne.

The gems on his forehead may glitter,
As he graces some pageant of state;
The sweat-beads are brighter and fitter
On thine, man, whom labour makes great.

Be loving and just to thy neighbour,
Have fear for thy Maker alone,
And know—'tis as noble to labour
As to rule from the senate or throne.

JOHN FRANCIS WALLER.

PEGGY OGLIVIE'S INHERITANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROUND THE COURT," ETC.

CHAPTER IV.

WILD IN THE WOODS.

PEGGY OGLIVIE, at her advanced age of ten years, was possessed of a greater amount of freedom than usually falls to the lot of girls at that, or any other, time of life. According to good Mrs. Grant, the wife of the worthy minister of the parish, she was allowed to "run wild in the woods like a little pagan." But though, to a certain extent, this was true, she was not the untaught, unkempt, uncared-for creature which the words might lead one to suppose.

Quaintly dressed in garments of wonderful material, and still more wonderful make, her appearance was yet that of a little lady. Her skirts of white dimity, and spencers of stiff brocade, were improvised by Jean out of the contents of an old wardrobe which had belonged to her grandmother, and which had the grand, primitive quality of being made to last for ever.

Jean had carefully instilled manners into her little charge, at the risk of spoiling the work of Nature, for the girl was innately graceful and gracious. The faithful nurse had also taught her to read, with the "Shorter Catechism" for a primer, and the Gospel of St. John for a lesson-book.

Both Jean and her good man, Tammas, were from beyond the hills. Gaelic was their native tongue, and they spoke English with remarkable purity, so that Jean's teaching was not that of an ordinary Scotch peasant. But, having carried her tuition up to a certain point, she could go no further, and therefore she contrived that, at the age of eight, Peggy should be sent to the parish school, under the escort of Archie and Sandie Grant, the minister's sons, who had to pass the foot of Delaube every morning on their way thither. They were two or three years older than Peggy, and being kindly laddies, with no little sisters of their own, they took freely to the part of big brothers to the shy little lady given to their charge.

But by the time she was ten, Peggy had outstripped her companions, as far as learning was concerned, and was able to lend them a helping hand at their tasks, in return for their ready championship.

The schoolmaster, a scholar himself, as the parish teachers of Scotland usually were, was a bad hand at drilling dunces, but the true scholar fared well under his care. He could make little of Archie and Sandie Grant, except in the matter of arithmetic, and there little Peggy was almost a match for the boys. Even the terrible catechism, which brought care to the heart of the conscientious Sandie, and taught Archie to endure the lash with the fortitude

of a Red Indian—if it taught him nothing else—was no trouble to her. The rhythm of its grand and musical prose got into her head, and glided off her glib little tongue, like magic.

Now, every Saturday afternoon, Archie and Sandie had to go through a rehearsal at home of all the questions learned during the week, often to the number of eighteen, and their freedom on that freest of days depended on their ability to go through the ordeal, of which the more fortunate Peggy knew nothing. She was quite at liberty to forget what she had learned, and if the meaning of much of it had crossed their minds, which it never did, it would have been well that they should forget some of the things set down there. And yet I will not say it was of no use, or, as some will have it, worse than useless. The catechism expresses the convictions of noble-minded and religious men, and the mark which it makes upon the minds of the children of Scotland is that of a body of truth to be steadfastly upheld as the background of their lives.

Except when confined at home to make up their quota of catechism, Archie and Sandie usually spent the Saturday afternoons with Peggy, in the woods round Delaube, pelting one another with fir-cones, running up and down the slippery slopes where no grass grew, but where a thick mat of pine-needles strewed the ground, and gave out their delicious scent to the tread; and finally fishing in the stream which, hidden by its wooded banks, ran eastward to the sea, at the bottom of the hill.

"Are you sure you can say them?" demanded Peggy of her companions, somewhat anxiously, as they parted at the foot of Delaube one Saturday, a little after noonday, to meet again and spend the long summer evening as was their wont.

"I'm no sure," said Sandie; "but I'll say them a' the road hame;" and with that he proceeded to smoothe out the worn pamphlet, and place it in his bonnet to shield it from the fluttering breeze, that he might con it as he walked.

The more confident Archie, who had been guilty on occasion of this same bonnet lining, reading from the book whenever he was at a loss, while he seemed to the master at his desk, to be modestly or abstractedly studying the inside of his cap, was "quite sure." He could not trust to any trick in his father's study, or his mother's parlour, besides, they were not fair game, as he considered the dominie; but he believed in letting his memory remain blank till close upon the time of the exercise, and then giving off from it a fresh impression committed to it immediately before. Sometimes his plan succeeded, but oftener it hopelessly and dismally failed.

They had made unusual preparations for a fishing expedition, and sad would be the disappointment if

Archie failed in the preliminary trial. So it was with a warning word to him that Peggy parted from her companions, calling after him, "Now, Archie! it will be all your fault if we can't go to Strathie Pool."

The afternoon sun had only just begun to slant the shadows of the fir-trees against the hill, when Peggy set out to keep her tryst. She had swallowed her dinner, which was neither more nor less than oatcake and milk, and asked her grandfather if he wanted anything.

Clear of the house and garden, the little lady flew down the hill-side by the steepest and nearest way, catching at the boles of the trees to save herself from falling, and heedless alike of hands and hair. She was all impatience, for had not Archie promised to bring a real set of fishing-tackle, rod and reel, hooks and flies included? and had not Sandie promised to make her a basket of rushes, to carry home her share of the trout they made sure of catching?

A certain point on the bank of the stream was their appointed place of meeting. Peggy reached it breathless and alone: no one was there. But that did not discourage her: she was generally first. So she dallied awhile on her own side of the water, then wandered up and down, and put her little hands, trumpet-fashion, to her mouth, as she had seen the boys do, and made the silence ring with their names. No answering shout, however, came to her listening ear; and at last she crossed the stepping-stones herself—a thing she was forbidden to do, for a false step might have landed her in a deep, whirling pool, from which she could hardly have scrambled without help on to the great smooth boulders of granite in the middle of the course.

Peggy, however, crossed in safety, climbed the opposite bank, and went on through the wood on the other side. Still her companions were not forthcoming. On she went, in her eagerness, straight on, and never heeding that the way was new to her, unlike the ways on her own side of the river—never doubting, either, that she would come out clear on the other side of the wood, as she was in the habit of doing there. Over broken ground of all kinds she skipped and scrambled, and at last, tired of running and calling at intervals, she sat down and waited what she considered a long time. Then, as she thought, she turned back toward the stepping-stones.

But the ground grew stranger to her, and there was no end to the trees, growing rank on rank as far as she could see, when she reached a knoll higher than the rest about. She had taken off her little gipsy hat and tied the ribbons together, and put it over her arm, basket-wise, filled with treasures; but now she walked slowly, and with a sense of awe, among the pillared trees, one side black in shadow, and the other red in the sunset. She was weary, but it was not that which pressed upon her heart. A new sense of the vast, the unknown, the infinite, had taken hold of her, and she sat down, sighing heavily.

CHAPTER V.

THE FOREST HOUSE.

PEGGY had not sat down to cry, as many a little girl would have done. Not that she was, by any means, above crying, on occasion, but it did not occur to her to feel very miserable just then. The sharp edge of her disappointment had worn off. The beauty and stillness soothed her. She began to sing; unconsciously, because the pillared place was solemn, choosing a solemn strain—her favourite psalm set to one of the plaintive melodies of the Scottish kirk:

"The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want,
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; he leadeth me
The quiet waters by."

The blackbird drowned her sweet low warble with his loud clear song, and the thrush began where the blackbird left off. Her voice was lost in the sunset concert of the wood; but the light little figure could be seen against the dark background for some distance through a favourable opening in the trees, and so it came to pass that she had been seen by one who drew near in aimless curiosity, near enough to catch a few notes of her psalm.

The elderly woman who sauntered up to the tree where Peggy sat, was a great deal shyer than the child, and would have most likely sauntered past, and turned back without having courage to speak, but that Peggy rose and advanced eagerly, asking the nearest way to Delaube.

Instead of giving a direct answer to the simple question, the lady replied by asking another, in a half-startled tone: "Do you come from Delaube?"

Peggy nodded and smiled her assent.

"And what's your name?"

"Peggy Oglivie," answered the girl.

"My name is Janet Oglivie," said the lady, meekly, and as if she addressed an equal, "and I will show you if you will come with me."

The girl had no hesitation, and they turned at once in the direction from which her guide had approached. But the latter got into a flutter of excitement as she led the way, looking back every now and then to see if Peggy followed.

They soon came to a low wall, built of loose stone, overgrown with moss and grass, and overtopped by a thick screen of elder-bushes that grew within the enclosure. The trees beyond seemed to stand as thickly as in the wood, only they were of various kinds—slender birches and stunted oaks, mingling with stately pine. A wicket gate let them into a damp and obscure path, over which the elder-trees had stretched their boughs till they almost roofed it in. The air was heavy with the odour of their thick white blossoms. A sense of oppressive heaviness made itself felt about the place.

Through a high hedge into a kitchen garden, at the back an irregular mass of stone-built outhouses, Peggy was led round to the front of a house, longer and lower than Delaube, but of the same material and plainness.

"Stay here till I speak to my sister," said Miss Janet Oglivie, leaving her there, and disappearing within the house.

In a few minutes she returned, and holding out her hand to Peggy, drew her first into a square hall, and then into a long low room, darkened by the trees that grew up almost within reach of the windows. At one window, which looked westward, there was a shimmer of burning gold through the all-surrounding trees. But turning within, all was sombre and chill—wide, shining spaces of pannelled wood, straight-backed chairs, covered with black hair-cloth, set against the walls at intervals, a barren plain of shining dark mahogany in the centre—everything was hard and dark and monotonous. On the polished granite mantelshef stood a ghost-like clock, framed in a white china structure which resembled a tomb, ticking loudly in the silence. A dreary blankness of expression pervaded the apartment, or rather, it was expressionless as living death.

A lady sat in one of the windows, before a little worktable, sewing something large and white—it might have been a shroud. She had not chosen the one sunny window, but what seemed the darkest of the other three. She was dressed in black silk, and had a pale and rigid face, with eyes of steely blue, which might have played softly once, and even melted, but which were hard and fixed now. Her plentiful hair of mingled red and grey was done into three stiff bows on each side of her forehead, and behind was reared into a formidable structure, upheld by an enormous tortoiseshell comb of shining red and black.

Peggy fixed her eyes upon the point at once, till they were withdrawn by the voice of Miss Margery saying, sharply—

"So you are Peggy Oglivie." The little stranger felt herself shrinking from the keen inspection of the cold blue eyes. "And what's brought you here?" the voice went on in a harsh tone.

"Oh, Margery!" interposed Miss Janet, "she'll be both tired and hungry, for she lost her way in the wood."

"Sit down and get something to eat," said Miss Margery, stiffly.

"No, thank you," said Peggy; "I want to go home."

"Ye're no Oglivie," said the former, abruptly, (Miss Janet had left the room for some hospitable purpose): "ye'll take after your mother, doubtless."

"Jean says I'm no like my mother, for she was the bonniest ledly she ever saw."

"A bonnie ledly, indeed!" sneered the grim woman; "the less said about her the better. No, no, ye are no Oglivie," she repeated, still looking keenly at the girl, and with a dissatisfied air, as if it was a great defection from duty on Peggy's part.

There was something in the tone, which roused the girl's spirit. "I don't want to be like the Oglivies," she answered, bravely.

"And what for no, Miss Peggy?" asked the lady, secretly amused.

Gentle little Peggy hesitated a moment, from instinctive aversion to say ungentle words. But the sneer about her mother made her reply, "Because they are neither good nor bonnie."

Instead of being angry, Miss Margery relaxed into a grim smile.

"That's true," she answered, and then went on, more sternly: "The Oglivies are an ill race to come of: the judgment of God has overtaken them."

"Stop, Margery; you're frightening the bairn," said her sister, re-entering the room; "she's grown as white as a sheet."

But it was not the words of her kinswoman which had made the sensitive colour fly out of Peggy's cheeks. It was an apparition at one of the gloomy windows. A tall form crowned with a shock of red hair, from beneath which looked a weird white face, was standing there. It was the form of manhood, with the gait and gestures of infancy. He waved in one hand a flag of paper, and with the other grasped the window-sill; and seeing the strange inmate of the room, began to make the most hideous grimaces and gesticulations.

Whether from fear, or from some other instinct common to the wild, shy creatures of the wood, in an instant Peggy had shot past Miss Janet, standing in the open doorway, crossed the hall, and sped straight forward over the grass-plot, and between the trees, and out of a gate, which also happily stood open. Every faculty quickened a hundredfold, she descried a gleam of the river in the distance, and made straight for it. Instinctively she turned the right way along its banks, with the sunset flaming in her face, and reached the familiar stepping-stones, and there sat Archie and Sandie, waiting, with a philosophic patience which Peggy might well have envied.

"Where have you been, Peggy?" greeted her from both in a breath. "We were only kept in a little while. Mother came and heard me," said Archie, "before my time was up."

To all of which Peggy responded by letting fall her hat full of treasures, covering her face with her hands, and sobbing bitterly. She had not cried till she was out of the wood, but now she could not stop weeping, and the two loyal little fellows, one on each side, walked up the hill towards home with her, in silent commiseration.

CHAPTER VI.

PEGGY DEMANDS AN EXPLANATION.

JEAN'S indignation knew no bounds, when she gathered from the quivering lips of her little mistress, where she had been and the reception she had met with. "Ye'll never go near them again, the ill-faured (ill-favoured), hard-hearted limmers. They turned your mother away from their doors on as bleak a night as ever blew, and her in her trouble too; it's my belief her death lies at their door," she said in her heat, which was rather more than prudence warranted.

"Tell me about my mother, Jean," said Peggy.

with a sudden calmness, fixing her eyes on the woman's face.

"It's very little I ken about her," answered Jean, wavering under the look, "and that little sad enough; better let it rest."

"That's just what *they* said," cried the girl, impatiently. "Why am I never to speak about her? Why did she die and leave me?" she went on, passionately. "You said they killed her, and if you won't tell me, I'll go to gran'father and ask all about her."

"You'll do no such thing," said Jean, in alarm; "besides, you'll vex him and make him ill, and I can tell you more than he can. So be a good lassie, and you'll hear in time."

The plea for her grandfather was a bit of domestic diplomacy on the part of Jean. There was something in the permanent affliction and helplessness of the man which appealed to the forbearance of the girl, and had done so from her earliest years. So she returned to the attack on Jean.

And Jean pacified her with an account of her mother's illness and death, in which there were discrepancies for the girl to ponder; gaps in the little history, on which she meditated till Jean was called upon to answer the awkward questions which would fill them up. And what with the sadness of the tale, and the mystery which hung about it, a shade of dreaminess came to sober the natural vivacity of the girl, and to give her more and more of the odd feeling she so well described as "walking in a story."

As time went on, Jean had been obliged to fill up most of these gaps in her narrative, and to linger on the details in order to satisfy the girl's craving for some knowledge of her unknown mother, and, in truth, to gratify herself when she was no longer in fear of its doing harm, and considered Peggy of an age to understand.

But for this lingering, the story was a very brief one. It was simply that at the darkening of a cold spring day, when the bitter east wind was blowing, and the house was shut for the night, when Tammas and Jean were sitting down to their supper of porridge and milk, a tap came to the door, too distinct to be mistaken for the wind. It was at the kitchen entrance, which looked down into the wood, just then sounding like a sea in the roar of the blast. On opening the door, Jean had found a countryman, bearing a box on his shoulders with one hand, and with the other trying to support a woman, who had sunk down evidently in a fainting condition. The man said he hoped they had come to the right place at last. The young woman wanted Mr. Louis Oglivie, but at any rate he would take her no further that night, as it would be nothing short of murder. His cart was at the foot of the hill, and he had toiled up with her and her box, and meant to leave them there. She had wanted to be taken to Mr. Oglivie's, and did not seem quite to know where; so he had taken her to "The Forest House," because there were ladies there; and she had told her story, whatever it was, the man said, and been sent away. He had lifted

her into the cart again, thinking she would die every minute; and, as, he did not want to have a dead woman on his hands, they had better take her in.

During this explanation, they had carried her between them into the warm kitchen and laid her before the fire, all glowing with red-hot peat, and the flame of the pine-sticks, which Tammas threw on from time to time. When she "came to herself," as Jean expressed it, she had strength enough left to tell them the claim she had on the house, as the wife of Louis Oglivie, and to plead, not for her own sake, for she seemed past caring what became of herself, but for the sake of her unborn child, that she might stay under the roof which her husband had promised should shelter her. "She was the bonniest creature I ever saw," Jean always said at this point, "and the look in her een would have melted the heart of a stone."

Then Jean, in fear and trembling, had gone to Mr. Gilbert Oglivie, to tell him what had happened, and, in the meantime the countryman had taken an unceremonious leave.

"He was never a hard man with women, Gilbert Oglivie," Jean would go on to say, half to herself, "and he neither answered good nor bad when I told him how his son's wife had come home; and when I asked, 'What am I to do with her?' he only said, 'Make her as comfortable as you can.' Poor man! his trouble was new to him then, and I was feared to tell him; but I needn't has been, for he was aye good to women folk."

Then Jean had sent Tammas trudging three good miles for the doctor, and he had not been in the house half an hour, after driving hot haste in his gig before the baby was born. And the mother lived through it, and would have lived, Jean asserted, but for the chill at her heart. Jean believed that she died of not wishing to live. "Mr. Louis did not mean to forsake her like that," she would say, but his regiment had been ordered to Ireland some months before, and he had left her behind, promising to prepare for her reception at his father's house. He was always for leaving things to chance, especially when he was at a distance; always averse to doing what was disagreeable to himself, or anybody else, if he was in immediate contact with the person who had to suffer.

He had failed to send money—"his pretty Peggy could get all she wanted for a time in his name, without money." He had failed to write to his father—"people would take care of her, if it came to the worst." He would run down and take her to his home." Such was the infirm purpose, the shallow heart, the selfishly indulgent nature of the man.

And the tender trust of the girlish wife was shaken, so deeply shaken, that even had she lived it must have died. Yet if she had survived her sorrow, much might have been changed for the better in the career, if not in the character, of Louis Oglivie. She would have risen up, strengthened herself, to support and strengthen him. During the few days she lived she had made this impression on the hard-headed, warm-hearted Jean, so that she would often

say with a sigh, "If she had lived she would have made a man of Mr. Louie." This indeed was to be doubted, seeing that Nature had not furnished the material for that purpose.

Yet the dying girl did not seem to love her husband less because of his fatal weakness, but more perhaps. Her eyes had been opened to the feebleness of the bright, facile nature of the man she had married; but her heart yearned over that feebleness as it might over the weakness and helplessness of an infant. She seemed to be unconscious of the help and strength that was in her, and thought, in her humility, that his child might lay stronger hold on his affections than she had been able to do, and so with her last breath she had prayed that this little one might lead him. So in those last days she opened her heart to Jean.

She had her purposes and her plans. There was her little box. She had not spent a penny that she could help since he had left her. She had stinted

herself in every way, that she might not contract a single debt. She had only in extremity thrown herself upon his relations, believing, too, that he would have authorised it; but his prolonged silence and her sudden illness, together with the rough journey and harsh reception, had run the sensitive spirit too low. It is idle to say that people do not die of broken hearts; that sorrow does not kill: sorrow does kill—not as the sword or the bullet kills, but in its own way, slowly but surely sapping the foundations of life, and opening the door to the death that lies in wait for us at every turn.

Even at the last, an access of hope might have saved the poor young mother; but instead of that, hope deferred sickened her heart. No letter came from her husband. The day after her death it arrived, and fell into the hands of Gilbert Oglivie, who had till then refused to see her, and who laid it in her coffin, looking on his son's wife for the first and the last time.

(To be continued.)

"AFTER MANY DAYS."

IT was a calm autumn evening—a few bright streaks in the sky showed where the sun had gone down. The birds were asleep. There was no breeze to stir the branches, or sweep the honeysuckle-wreaths against the lattices of the white cottage in the lane. Nature was at rest.

Inside the cottage all was quiet. The little serving maiden sat beside her mistress's couch: that mistress was awaiting a solemn guest—even the Angel of death.

"Bessie," she said, "is it time for the coach to come in?"

"I should think it's in the inn-yard now, ma'am," answered the servant.

Another silence; then, "Was that our gate, Bessie?"

"No, ma'am; it's only next door's."

The dying woman sighed. For ten years she had listened for a well-known step along her garden path. Now, she knew, if it came to-morrow, it would be too late. And she lay and looked at the darkening sky.

"Bessie," she said, presently, "you don't remember John?"

"Yes, a little," replied the servant; "I remember his merry ways, but I don't think I should know him."

"Ah! ten years is a long time," said the patient mother, "you were quite a child then; but I should know John,—I should know his step—his very touch on the garden-gate: I shall never hear it now."

"Mr. John will have something to be sorry for," murmured Bessie, wiping her eyes.

"I don't know," said the mother, sharply; "perhaps he's dead—perhaps he's waiting for me in heaven. We have no right to judge before we know."

"But you heard he was alive five years after he ran away, ma'am," pleaded Bessie, in self-excuse.

"May his God forgive him as his mother does," sighed the invalid. "Oh, John, my boy, my only one, why didn't you remember the days when you kneeled in your little bedgown, and followed my words as I taught you to pray? Why didn't you remember the kiss I gave you when you brought home your first prize? if you'd thought of these things, you wouldn't have left me to pine for you, and die without you!"

"It seems as if your love had been thrown away ma'am," sobbed the girl.

"No, no, Bessie," said the dying woman, speaking more calmly. "It is planted in John's heart, though it's slow to bear fruit. Still, it's there, and some day it will come up. I wonder if I shall know in heaven!"

By this time the last bright streak had faded from the sky. The mother turned her face to the wall and was silent. Bessie drew the curtains, and stole down-stairs to fetch supper. When she returned, her mistress had not stirred. She was asleep, with tears wet upon her cheeks. Yes, she was asleep, but she would wake no more!

Five years later, a glorious dawn brightened over a wide Australian plain. The thick wild vegetation rustled in the fresh morning air. A solitary way-farer, pausing on a rising ground, thought the scene seemed as free and unsullied as was the whole world thousands of years ago, before the angel with the flaming sword guarded the gate of Eden. Not quite, though; for, on his right hand, far off, lay a long, low building, with even rows of windows; and in its neighbourhood were sundry small huts, whence rose light wreaths of smoke, showing their owners were already astir. It was a convict settlement.

Suddenly the wanderer was startled by the report of a pistol among the ferns around him, and the noise was followed by blasphemous yells of pain. A

tall, athletic man, dusty and blood-stained, burst from among the bushes, followed by two others with weapons in their hands. The fugitive sank down like a wounded wild beast, and the others seized him.

"I'll not go back till you carry me," said the hunted man; "you may kill me, but I'll not go back."

"Handcuff him, and keep him here while I fetch more help," said one of the gaolers. And it was speedily done, though not without a fierce struggle. And then the convict lay on the sward, chained and helpless, his neglected wound welling forth blood with every panting breath.

The startled wanderer gazed sorrowfully on the piteous scene. He was a young man, and carried his English bloom about him, unbrowned by the suns and winds of bush-life. Where now was his dream of Eden? Yet his heart was touched by the wild despairing face of the baffled man on the ground, and he drew near, and bent over him.

"Take care," said the remaining gaoler; "he can't very well do you a mischief now, but he will if he can."

"I am not afraid," said the stranger. "My poor fellow, let me bind my handkerchief about your wounded arm."

The gaoler whistled and sauntered off.

"Don't touch me," moaned the convict; "I want to bleed to death;" and he repulsed the friendly hand.

"Nay, nay," said the other, "when you long for death, don't forget, after it comes the judgment."

"I can't help it. I must take my chance. There can't be much worse than this."

"Don't say that. While there is life in this world there is hope."

"Not for me," groaned the convict.

"Yes," said the other, "at the worst in this life we may win hope for the next. We can't be worse than the dying thief, or Mary Magdalene, and yet our Saviour's love was given to them, and they are with Him now."

"It's a long while since I've had any love," muttered the miserable man.

"Perhaps it is your own fault," said the other, gently; "but certainly One has always loved you, and that is the Lord."

"I can't believe it. Why should he love me? I don't deserve it."

"Don't you believe in any undeserved love?" asked the young man.

The convict raised his dark eyes with a strange light in them, and in a very different voice he answered, "Yes, I do." And then he dropped his face, and his whole form shook with convulsed sobs.

"Then by that undeserved love, understand His love," said the stranger, solemnly. "He longs to save you. He sees you now. His love will meet you as the forgiving father met the prodigal son. Do not disappoint him."

There was no answer but those throbbing sobs; but the young missionary understood the stormy nature with which he was dealing, and was well con-

tent. He saw the other keepers approaching, and bent down again.

"I shall pray for you. Tell me your name."

"We call him Number Twelve, and a rare bad case he is," put in the gaoler.

The chained man looked up with streaming eyes. "She called me John," he said, "that name will be enough. It's my mother I mean. She's dead now. I wonder if they in heaven know about things down here?"

"If they do," said the missionary, "let your future life add a new joy to her bliss; understand God's love by its reflection in hers."

He watched the melancholy procession till it passed under the prison archway, and then he went home.

Twenty years later, the sun that set over that Australian plain did not illumine a silent or barren scene. There was a little village with simple shops and neat houses; and dotted about the vicinity were snug farms with large enclosures around them. There was a good inn in the village, and a coach had just set down its passengers before it. One middle-aged gentleman amongst them, looked about him with amazement.

"Well, it is changed!" he exclaimed.

"You may say so, indeed, sir," said a cheerful farmer-like man standing near.

"No room in the house, sir," said an ostler, addressing the traveller; "all the beds are full."

"Never mind," remarked the good-natured countryman, "there's a spare room in my farmhouse, and my wife and I are simple people, like Abraham and Sarah, and we're glad of a stranger's company."

So he led the traveller down a shady lane to a great, rambling, roomy house, where he was received by a buxom dame, and regaled with a plentiful supper. And then the large rustic household came tramping in to the pleasant keeping-room, and a chapter was read and a hymn was sung.

"Your lines are fallen in pleasant places," said the traveller to his host. "It reminds me of good old times in England."

"And yet we're called 'the scum' of the old country," returned the host.

"That's only the convicts," said the traveller.

"That's a great many of us," replied the farmer.

"Do you object to employing them?" asked the guest.

"I needn't, because I am one myself," responded the host, with a grave smile.

"Well, it's a noble thing to keep right, and it's a noble thing to return to right," said the traveller. "Did you ever happen to hear anything of a man named John, who was Number Twelve in prison?"

"That's me," said the farmer.

And the two looked at each other and understood it all.

"The memory of my mother's love did it," said the farmer; "and now-a-days, I like to believe she can look down from heaven and see me."

I. F.